



## ***AOT in Action***

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

### **A Message from Director Sherry Henry:**

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Good morning,

A growing trend among our travelers is the desire to be more environmentally friendly. Research conducted by the PhoCusWright group, has shown us that more than four out of 10 U.S. travelers consider environmental impact to be important to them when planning their travel. Vacationers, as well as business travelers, are mindful of the impact they make on the natural resources of their destination city and are looking for eco-friendly travel options.

As an industry, this is a critical trend to consider when we are marketing Arizona's tourism assets. For that reason, AOT has joined the [Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association](#) (AzHLA) and the [Arizona Department of Environmental Quality](#) (ADEQ) in the launch of the state's first [Certified Green Lodging](#) program.

This new program was conceptualized by AzHLA in collaboration with ADEQ and is a great draw for our state. We want our visitors to understand that our industry is deeply committed to preserving the environment and dedicated to preserving our treasured destinations.

To help further promote this great initiative, our agency will be designating those hotels that have been certified Green through this program on our consumer Web site, [www.Arizonaguide.com](http://www.Arizonaguide.com), and within our Official State Visitors Guide. This will allow visitors to see our commitment to Green tourism.

We want to thank the Arizona Hotel and Lodging Association, along with the Arizona Department of Environment Quality for developing what is one of the best programs of its kind in the country.

To learn more about the [Certified Green Lodging](#) program, visit [www.azhla.com](http://www.azhla.com).

Have a great week.

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## AOT News

### **Social Media 101 Arizona Tourism University Workshop**

AOT, in collaboration with the Center for American Indian Economic Development (CAIED), will be presenting a Social Media 101 Arizona Tourism University workshop.

This is a complimentary workshop and is open to everyone. It doesn't matter which area of the industry you are from, hotels, restaurants or chambers of commerce, if you're just beginning with your social media efforts, this is the workshop for you!

The session information is below:

#### **Friday, December 17**

Northern Arizona University Computer Training Center at the [W.A. Franke College of Business](#)

Registration: 8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

Social Media 101 lecture: 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Lunch (on your own): 11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Computer Lab: 12:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Session presenter will be Jerry Foreman – Northern Arizona University, Photography Instructor and Computer Trainer.

For more information, please contact Dawn Melvin, 602-364-3707 or via e-mail at [dmelvin@azot.gov](mailto:dmelvin@azot.gov) or to sign up for the workshop send your RSVP to [ATURSV@azot.gov](mailto:ATURSV@azot.gov).

### **New Update to AOT's Research Web site!**

The following items have been updated in the Research and Statistics section of AOT's business-to-business Web site [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov).

- [National, Regional, Arizona Lodging October 2010](#)
- [County Lodging October 2010](#)
- [State Park Visitation October 2010](#)
- [State Park Visitation September 2010](#)
- [Gross Sales & Tourism Taxes September 2010](#)

For additional information or questions, please contact Melissa Elkins, Research Manager, at 602-364-3716 or via e-mail at [melkins@azot.gov](mailto:melkins@azot.gov).

### **Send Us Your Holiday Travel Deals & Packages!**

Now that we're heading into the holiday season, we're looking for holiday package deals from around the state to showcase on the Travel Deals and Packages section of [www.ArizonaGuide.com](http://www.ArizonaGuide.com). Post your travel packages today at

<http://www.arizonaguide.com/arizona-tourism-partners> to take advantage of this no-cost opportunity.

Travel deals and packages can be uploaded at <http://www.arizonaguide.com/arizona-tourism-partners>.

For more information and step by step instructions, please visit our help guide located at <http://www.arizonaguide.com/arizona-tourism-partners/travel-deals-guide-help>.

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## AOT Activities

### **Toronto Media Marketplace a Success!**

The Arizona Office of Tourism hosted its first media focused marketplace in Toronto last week. Fifty-six members of the media from the area came to the evening event held at the beautiful Boiler House in Toronto's Distillery Historic District. Partners from Flagstaff, Scottsdale, Sedona, Tempe and Yuma joined AOT to promote all the new and unique offerings and events around the state. Two lucky journalists each won a fantastic trip to Arizona provided so generously by some of our great supplier partners. Thank you for helping to make this a great first event! For more information, please contact Jennifer Sutcliffe at [jsutcliffe@azot.gov](mailto:jsutcliffe@azot.gov) or 602-364-3693.

### **Arizona Office of Tourism Generates New Leads from French Media Mission**

Mary Rittmann, AOT's Trade and Media Relations director, joined Laura Guarneri, AOT's public relations representative in France, for a media mission to Paris and Nice. The team met with 15 journalists and generated several leads for future press trips. For more information, please contact Mary Rittmann at [mrtrittmann@azot.gov](mailto:mrtrittmann@azot.gov) or 602-364-3730.

## Upcoming Events & Activities

### **UK Trade Mission**

**Dates:** December 2010

**Location:** United Kingdom

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## Arizona Centennial News

### **100th Anniversary Commemoration of Arizona's Constitutional Convention**

The Arizona Historical Advisory Commission and The Arizona Centennial will be co-hosting a special event Thursday, Dec. 9, in conjunction with the Arizona State Capitol Museum to commemorate the signing of the Arizona Constitution 100 years ago. The event will be held

from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. at the Arizona Capitol Museum in the Old Senate Chambers, 1700 W. Washington Street.

Former valley radio host Dave Pratt will emcee the ceremony, and Governor Jan Brewer and Secretary of State Ken Bennett will honor several descendants of the original framers of the constitution who will be in attendance. Official State Historian Marshall Trimble will perform a special song and onlookers including Arizona Supreme Court Justices and elected officials will be able to view select artifacts that were utilized during the Constitutional Convention 100 years ago.

Background: One hundred years ago on Dec. 9, 1910, in anticipation of statehood, 52 delegates from every region of the territory of Arizona gathered on the last day of a grueling session to sign the newly-crafted state constitution. Their hard work and foresight brought Arizona several steps closer on its quest for statehood.

### **Last Informational Summit for Arizona Centennial!**

The Arizona Centennial Commission will host an informational summit for Arizona community leaders, Thursday, December 16 from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. at the Arizona Historical Society Museum at Papago Park, 1300 N. College Ave., Tempe.

This is the last in a series of summits held throughout the state by the Commission to inform and engage Arizonans in planning for Arizona's centennial. Officially, there are only 448 days until February 14, 2012, so if you haven't started planning for the centennial yet, this summit will help you initiate plans before it's too late.

The summit will give elected officials, business, tribal and community leaders and citizens the opportunity to hear first-hand about signature projects and events being planned by the Arizona Centennial Commission, in collaboration with the Arizona Historical Advisory Commission. In addition, the program will provide information about communities already making plans for Arizona's 100th birthday as well as creative ideas to participate.

Start your plans for Arizona's 100th birthday now! The clock is ticking!

To RSVP for the summit, contact: [RSVP@arizona100.org](mailto:RSVP@arizona100.org) or 602-364-4157 by **December 9**.

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## **Industry News**

### **Final Week to RSVP for Scottsdale CVB's Customer Service Program**

Don't miss your chance to ensure you and your team are "visitor ready." After receiving rave reviews about our 2010 Annual Meeting keynote speaker, Scott Deming, the Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau is hosting Mr. Deming for three sessions on Dec. 14 to help our community gear up for high season. Join us for this free program where you'll hear from Mr. Deming, a leading authority on branding and customer service. He'll take us on a fast-paced,

high-energy journey through the critical steps to creating the ultimate customer experience. This is a must-attend seminar for anyone who interacts with visitors. Please encourage your staff and colleagues to attend. This free program on Tuesday, Dec. 14, is being offered at three locations and times: 7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. at Hotel Valley Ho; 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at Hyatt Regency Scottsdale Resort; and 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. at The Boulders Resort. This is a free event. RSVP by Dec. 8 at [www.ScottsdaleCVB.com/Scott-Deming](http://www.ScottsdaleCVB.com/Scott-Deming). For more information, e-mail [RSVP@scottsdalecvb.com](mailto:RSVP@scottsdalecvb.com) or call 480-429-2259.

### **Consumer Confidence Hits 5-month High**

A monthly survey shows Americans' confidence in the economy rose in November to the highest level in five months amid more hopeful signs.

The reading is an encouraging sign at the beginning of the holiday shopping season. But confidence remains weak as Americans grapple with high unemployment.

The Conference Board says Tuesday its Consumer Confidence Index now stands at 54.1, up from a revised 49.9 in October. Analysts were expecting 52.0. November's reading marks the highest point since June's 54.3.

Economists watch confidence closely because consumer spending accounts for about 70 percent of U.S. economic activity and is critical to a strong rebound. It takes a reading of 90 to indicate a healthy economy. (*Associated Press, November 30*)

### **Group Business Triggers 'Sluggish' October U.S. Hotel Rate Growth**

U.S. hotel rates continued to inch upward in October, a pattern that should continue for the rest of the year, according to Smith Travel Research data.

U.S. average daily rate in October rose 1.2 percent compared with the prior year. Occupancy reached 61.3 percent, up 6.9 percent from October 2009, contributing to an 8.2 percent increase in revenue per available room.

STR president Mark Lomanno attributed the "sluggish" room rate growth to "lower-rated group business that was booked months before there was a significant demand turnaround. We're hopeful that we will see steady, but probably slow, room rate growth for the remainder of the year."

Business Travel News reports New York and Boston posted the highest rate increases, up 6.9 percent and 6 percent, respectively. Rates declined in a few markets, including Philadelphia (down 7.3 percent) and Nashville (down 5.1 percent). (*Marketing & Tourism Trends, November 30*)

### **Airlines Cautiously Adding Flights**

The recession brought deep capacity cuts to the skies, with airlines shedding up to 15 percent of their flights in some cases. Now, after nearly a year of positive trends, and with an optimistic outlook for the months ahead, airlines are cautiously adding back some of the capacity that was lost.

Chief among these is JetBlue, which is taking on nine new planes and adding 10 percent capacity this quarter alone. For the low-cost carrier, there is a clear opportunity to get the jump on larger rivals and siphon off some of the returning passengers that might otherwise choose, say, American or Delta.

Alaska is also adding significant capacity, with a 9 percent boost. Other airlines are focusing on international capacity. Delta raised international capacity 13 percent in November, and American increased international flights by almost 11 percent.

But all of this new capacity comes with risk. Airlines have profited in recent quarters primarily because travel demand skyrocketed, outpacing airline supply, which had remained low since those initial recession-era cuts. Soaring demand plus limited supply equals higher prices, and airlines raked in huge revenues as a result. So what happens when airlines start adding seats back?

The airlines' hunch is that demand is on a steady upward climb, and they are adding capacity slowly to avoid tipping the balance. If that hunch is correct, they will be able to continually increase capacity over the next 12 to 18 months while keeping fares stable.

If they're wrong—for example, if the economy remains flat and consumer confidence wanes—we'll either see capacity stabilize or shrink, and fares will likely come down a bit as well.

Readers, are you planning on traveling more in 2011, or are you waiting for the economy to improve? (*Smart Traveler*, November 30)

### **Arizona Highways in White Mountains Close for Winter**

The state Transportation Department is closing some roadways in the White Mountains for the winter. State Route 473 to Hawley Lake already is closed. State Route 261 between State Route 260 and Big Lake, as well as State Route 273 between Sunrise Park and Big Lake will be closed on Dec. 15. The highways typically reopen by mid-May. The department says motorists should carry snow chains or cables when traveling on snow packed and icy roads. State officials will respond to vehicle slide-offs but are urging motorists to slow down, drive defensively and allow extra time for winter trips. (*Associated Press*, December 2)

### **The Lost Decade Leads to Looming US Tourist Crisis**

International tourism is not just a big business. It's also a huge export. And that's why the US is on the brink of a tourism crisis, many observers increasingly agree. "The United States is losing market share as a tourist destination," writes Martha C. Wright in Slate.

According to the US Travel Association, the US's market share of global tourism dropped by almost one third from 2000 to 2009. That means 2.4 million fewer visitors in 2009 than at the beginning of the decade. Foreign tourists bring in US\$120 billion to the US economy. The business makes up eight percent of the US's overall exports, or one quarter of all exports in the services category. Tourism is one area where the US runs a healthy trade surplus.

One explanation of why the US is discouraging visitors comes from J. W. Marriott Jr. He largely blames increasingly tight airport security. "We've become a risk-averse country," said the 78-year-old hotel leader at a recent conference on economic growth. Intrusive bureaucracy also

discourages visitors, he said. At the same time, places such as Europe are making it easier for foreign visitors. "More Chinese visited Paris last year than the US," said Marriott. He pointed out that each Chinese traveler spends about \$7,000 per US visit compared to \$1,200 for each domestic traveler. He called the last ten years "The Lost Decade" because the US saw a loss of \$450 billion in exports and 440,000 jobs because of the decline of foreign visitors.

Worldwide, long haul flights are up by one third since 2000, so it's no problem for foreign visitors to get here. So what is the problem?

Problems, as in plural.

- Part of America's tourism problem is marketing, Slate says. "We don't have any at the national level," the article says. While states and cities do promotions to their specific areas, there aren't any agencies promoting the entire US as a country.
- Visa requirements. There are three dozen countries on a visa-waiver list but since 9-11, others not on that list go through an intensive process that includes an in-person interview just to visit here for a vacation. In some countries such as Brazil, there are only a handful of offices where personal interviews can take place. That process can take several months just for an interview.
- Perception. For the past decade, there's been a growing overseas sentiment that the US is increasingly becoming "Fortress America" with travelers complaining not only about growing security but also about a general feeling of not being welcome.

There have been some positive recent moves towards promoting international tourism.

The Travel Promotion Act last year set up the Corporation for Travel Promotion. An initial \$10 million was set aside (from fees on travelers coming to the US) to promote travel here. More money is expected from the new agency in the future.

"People have a perception of the US as protectionist, arrogant and inhospitable, and I think we need to change that image," said chairman Stephen J. Cloobek, who is CEO of Diamond Resorts International. "We're going to jump-start the marketing of America."

International visitors are specific in their individual needs. So the agency will target specific groups of people from various countries. One example: marketing to the Chinese market might involve the depth of cultural opportunities available here. Some of the new agency's money will have to go for the image issue. "We've got to overcome the perception that has built up of Fortress America," said Roger Dow, president and chief executive of the US Travel Association. (*Travel Mole, December 2*)

### **STR: Upscale Segment has Strong Weekly Gains**

The upscale segment reported the largest revenue-per-available-room increase for the week ending 27 November 2010, according to data from STR.

The segment's RevPAR rose 13.5% to US\$44.17, average daily rate was up 5.4% to US\$95.36, and occupancy increased 7.7% to 46.3%.

Overall, the industry's occupancy increased 7.0% to 43.6%, ADR was up 2.9% to US\$87.53, and RevPAR ended the week up 10.1% to US\$38.16.

Among the chain-scale segments, the economy segment rose 7.9% in occupancy to 43.9%, reporting the largest increase in that metric, followed by the midscale-with-food-and-beverage segment with a 7.8% increase to 37.5%.

The luxury segment experienced the largest ADR increase, rising 7.8% to US\$261.18.

Other than the upscale segment, two segments posted double-digit RevPAR increases: the luxury segment (+12.8% to US\$123.44) and the independent segment (+10.4% to US\$38.33).

Among the top 25 markets, Phoenix, Arizona, achieved the highest occupancy increase, rising 23.1% to 46.1%, followed by Seattle, Washington, with a 14.2% increase to 45.5%. Only two of the top markets reported occupancy decreases: Oahu Island, Hawaii (-7.3% to 70.1%), and Norfolk-Virginia Beach, Virginia (-3.6% to 36.9%).

San Francisco/San Mateo, California, reported the largest ADR increase, rising 7.6% to US\$110.26. Tampa-St. Petersburg, Florida, fell 4.0% in ADR to US\$74.01, reporting the largest decrease in that metric.

Three top markets reported RevPAR increases of more than 15%: Phoenix, Arizona (+28.1% to US\$39.33); Seattle (+21.3% to US\$41.85); and Orlando (+16.5% to US\$41.33). Oahu Island posted the largest RevPAR decrease, falling 6.3% to US\$109.19. (*HotelNewsNow.com, December 2*)

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### **Calendar of Events**

Visit [www.ArizonaGuide.com](http://www.ArizonaGuide.com) to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!

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